

On Wednesday, February 10, 2016, at 8:33 a.m., the Dayton City Commission met in regular session in the Commission Chambers of City Hall.

CALL TO ORDER

Mayor Whaley called the meeting to order.

INVOCATION

Commissioner Joseph gave the invocation.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

Mayor Whaley led the public in the Pledge of Allegiance.

ROLL CALL

Roll call was taken and Mayor Whaley, Commissioners Williams, Joseph, Mims and Shaw were present. The Clerk of Commission, Ms. Rashella Lavender, and the City Manager, Ms. Shelley Dickstein, were also present.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

Commissioner Mims made the motion to approve the minutes from the February 3, 2016, meeting.

Commissioner Williams seconded the motion. The previous meeting minutes were unanimously approved.

ORDER OF BUSINESS

Mayor Whaley asked the Clerk of Commission, Ms. Lavender, what is the nature and order of business for this meeting.

Ms. Lavender said, "Mayor Whaley, the sole order of business today is to present the Annual State of the City Address. Each year, at the direction of the Mayor, a Dayton City Commission meeting is set aside for the purpose of reporting the state of the city, highlighting some of the accomplishments of the year past, and remarking on initiatives for the year ahead. The format of the address is at the discretion of the Mayor. A State of the City Address has been offered since at least the 1980's and there have been a number of formats used. I am informed that you will present your remarks and will then adjourn the meeting from the podium."

STATE OF THE CITY ADDRESS

"In May of last year, renowned author and historian David McCullough released his new book *The Wright Brothers*. A two-time winner of the Pulitzer Prize in history, this may prove to be McCullough's most successful release in his career.

The Wright Brothers was at the top of the New York Times best-seller list for ten weeks and spent a total of 33 weeks on the list.

The success of this biography of Dayton's most notable hometown heroes is without a doubt one of the special highlights of the past year for our city. Through the writer's vibrant description of life in Dayton in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the town itself is seen as another character in the Wright Brothers story.

The book's spotlight on many of our most prominent landmarks has brought greater awareness and recognition to our city. Dayton History President Brady Kress reported last week that the number of visitors to some of these landmarks jumped 27 percent in the last year. And, he attributes this renewed interest in part to the popularity of McCullough's best-seller.

McCullough begins his book with this quote from a speech delivered by Wilbur Wright in 1910: "If I were giving a young man advice as to how he might succeed in life, I would say to him, pick out a good father and mother, and begin life in Ohio."

Now who can argue with that?

That's a great quote, and I can really relate to it. I am blessed to have two very loving and supportive parents. And, like me, Wilbur Wright was originally from Indiana and he chose to make Ohio his home.

But, I like to think Wilbur really meant to say that to succeed you should begin not just in Ohio, but in DAYTON, Ohio. He was probably just being nice and didn't want to offend anyone living in Cincinnati or Toledo.

I, on the other hand, do not feel so constrained.

Selfish, unapologetic promotion of Dayton is what our city officials are supposed to do. I think that's part of my job description.

As mayor, I am expected to brag about my city. And, when we consider the state of our city today, we have much to brag about.

Let me begin by bragging about our new city manager, Shelley Dickstein. Once again, congratulations, Shelley, and thank you for accepting this role.

Shelley's extensive background, her years of experience and her excellent management skills are tremendous assets. There is no question in my mind that she is the right person to lead our staff at this time. I think I speak for every member of the City Commission when I say we are excited to have Shelley working with us to continue moving our city forward.

And, our city is moving forward.

- Recent reports indicate that job growth for the Dayton region is at its highest level in 18 years. It is especially gratifying to know that the sector with the most robust growth is in manufacturing jobs. Our Makers Town Hall held in June of last year and our Manufacturing Day event held in October were both successful and well-attended, spotlighting the vital role manufacturing plays in Dayton's economy.

And, of course, the increased job growth translates into higher income tax revenues for the city. Receipts from income taxes increased more than 4.5% or nearly \$4.8 million in 2015.

- We are moving forward by investing more than \$57 million in infrastructure improvements, reconstructing and resurfacing major thoroughfares and residential streets and alleys, replacing water and sewer lines, rebuilding sidewalks and curbs and upgrading neighborhood recreational areas.
- In 2015, seven new tenants with a focus on research, innovation and technology located in Tech Town. And, five existing tenants expanded their operations there.
- The city is constructing a new 77,000 square foot hangar at Dayton International Airport for PSA Airlines, the only commercial airline whose corporate headquarters is located in Ohio. This new hangar represents a \$14 million investment. Additionally, the city is investing another \$20 million in infrastructure improvements at the airport.
- The construction of Dayton Children's new eight floor patient tower is well underway, and so is the 40,000 square foot Emerson Climate Technologies Innovation Center, now known as the Helix, at the corner of Main and Stewart Streets on the UD campus.
- We are moving forward with some significant historic preservation efforts including the adaptive reuse of the former DELCO manufacturing building into 129 market rate apartments and first floor restaurant and retail space.

Our efforts to have the Grant-Deneau Tower at 40 W. Fourth Street placed on the National Register of Historic Places could pave the way for its rehabilitation.

And, the commission was pleased to approve the recommendation of the community task force to invest \$700,000 into the Dayton Arcade last September. This permitted the structure to be stabilized and made weather tight, setting the stage for the multi-million dollar renovation plan announced in January involving Cross Street Partners of Baltimore, Maryland, and Dayton-based Miller-Valentine.

- The announcement that the Levitt Foundation has selected Dayton to help fund the construction of a state-of-the-art music venue at Dave Hall Plaza is exciting news. When completed, this promises to be an attractive new outdoor entertainment site, and, together with the new \$6 million Chaminade Julianne athletic facility currently under construction, it will dramatically add to the vibrancy of our downtown.
- We are moving forward with a renewed emphasis on customer service at City Hall. Improving customer relations and service delivery was announced as a major priority for the Commission last year. With City Manager Dickstein's leadership, a team has been working to set standards for quality service throughout the organization, making service excellence an integral part of our hiring, our training, and our employee performance reviews.

- And, we are excited to be joined by the most recent addition to the city commission, Commissioner Chris Shaw. Chris' background as a small businessman brings a fresh, new perspective to the commission, and we welcome him and his insights to our team.

It's great to be able to name off so many positive initiatives and developments that are happening in Dayton. The challenge will be to build on this momentum and keep our city moving forward in the days ahead. I believe we are well positioned to meet this challenge.

There is an article titled "How America Is Putting Itself Back Together" in the most recent issue of *The Atlantic*. In this piece, writer James Fallows provides examples of cities in America today that are experiencing success in rebuilding themselves after a period of decline.

Fallows and his wife Deb spent three years travelling back and forth across the country to visit and study a number of cities in various stages of renewal. As a result of his research, Fallows has identified a set of eleven common indicators or traits he found in each of these cities. He calls this list "Eleven Signs a City Will Succeed."

When we take a look at this list, Dayton appears to measure up pretty well.

Two of the indicators on Fallows' list are the presence of a research university and, also, a well-regarded community college. We are indeed fortunate to have the University of Dayton and Sinclair Community College as truly engaged civic partners. The University of Dayton Research Institute employs nearly 450 full-time researchers, and last September was awarded a \$99 million contract with the US Air Force to integrate new technologies. Sinclair, with its newly opened UAS indoor training and testing facility – the first of its kind in the nation – is a recognized leader in the evolving drone technology field. These institutions play an important role in our transition to a more high-tech and research related economy.

In addition, Dayton prides itself on being an open community, another indicator of success on Fallows' list. Commissioner Matt Joseph, whose grandparents came from the nation of Lebanon and whose wife is from Bosnia, has long championed our efforts to be more welcoming to those from other cultures. He, also, played a major role in organizing last year's 20th anniversary of the historic Dayton Peace Accords, bringing international attention to our city.

Through our Welcome Dayton Initiative we are able to promote an open community that welcomes people with diverse cultural backgrounds and identities. We are proud to celebrate the strength that comes from a diverse city. And, I am proud to have performed the first same-sex marriage in Ohio on June 26th of last year.

Two additional signs of a successful city are the presence of a revitalized downtown and a community that has big plans. The strategic vision of the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan and the attention and resources we have dedicated to the region's central city are certainly in line with these indicators:

- Investment in the greater downtown area since the Greater Downtown Dayton Plan was first introduced exceeds \$427 million.
- The Pop-Up project alone resulted in the opening of five new businesses in 2015.
- The construction of new housing in downtown Dayton, like the construction of 17 new townhomes at Monument Walk and 24 new townhomes at the Brownstones on Second Street, is keeping developers busy trying to keep pace with the demand for more downtown living space.
- Last year's launch of the Link Bike Share program, making it convenient to use a bike for short commutes downtown, was a great success. With 24 bike stations within a two mile radius of downtown, the program has registered more than 26,000 trips.
- And, the expected completion this year of the RiverScape River Run project will bring an exciting new recreational venue to downtown.

The presence of craft breweries is another indicator on Fallows list, and he considers it the most reliable sign of a city's success. Here, again, Dayton stacks up well. It's great to see our booming craft brewery scene attracting crowds, encouraging new business owners and developing into a fun, hip downtown entertainment draw.

And, as with everything in Dayton, we have taken it one step further. It is not enough to have successful breweries like Toxic Brew and the Dayton Beer Company. We have gone from brewing beer to distilling stronger libations, and we congratulate Buckeye Vodka and the Belle of Dayton distillery on their success as well.

Clearly the case can be made that Dayton is well positioned and positive things are happening. Still there remain serious challenges and difficult issues to address as we continue moving forward.

Our neighborhoods are beginning to show signs of rebirth after being bruised by the effects of the nationwide housing crisis. The city has invested millions in the removal of neighborhood eyesores and blight, including \$1.3 million just in the last year. Nearly 300 residential units were razed for a three year total approaching 1,500 units.

In addition, the city received more than 350 new Lot Links applications last year and transferred ownership of 174 properties to end users from prior year applications. Whether they have plans to maintain these properties as yard extensions or are committed to redeveloping or rehabbing vacant structures, we are working with these new owners to stabilize and renew our neighborhoods.

The U.S. Treasury is expected to make available later this year additional funding to assist communities across the nation in the removal of blight in the form of vacant, abandoned buildings. With our partners at the Montgomery County Land Bank, we will aggressively pursue our fair share of these funds in order to continue our efforts to right-size the city's housing stock.

Working with various neighborhood partners, including area residents, churches, the Dayton VA Center and Greater Dayton Premier Management, we are developing a new West Dayton Framework. This framework is intended to guide our efforts as we determine future housing and development plans in various West Dayton neighborhoods. To assist in this effort, we are partnering with Greater Dayton Premier Management to apply for a Choice Neighborhood Planning grant from HUD.

Another ongoing concern is in the area of police and community relations. Improving communications and the relationships between our police officers and the community they serve has been a serious focus of this city for several years. Commissioner Joey Williams has led this effort, meeting with the Community Police Council on a monthly basis. With his leadership, the Community Police Council has been expanded and made a permanent, formal part of the city's organization, ensuring that its work will continue in the future.

Any community can face a tragic situation at any time. The goal of the CPC is to ensure that if a critical event does occur, we can respond together as a community and begin the healing process in a thoughtful and meaningful way.

As we work to address all of these issues and endeavor to build on our past successes, there continues to be one unmistakable truth.

All of our efforts to create new jobs and attract new employers -- all of our efforts to make our downtown more vibrant -- all of our efforts to attract new families into our city -- all of our efforts to improve our neighborhoods -- all of these efforts will fall short of our dream of a brighter future if we fail to prepare our children to compete in tomorrow's world.

The members of the City of Learners Committee have been hard at work focusing on the need to better prepare our children for the future. Each of the five sub-committees have spent countless hours over the past year studying and developing action plans to address our priorities.

A number of teachers have taken advantage of the incentive package created to attract and retain new teachers.

The Mentoring Collaborative is working to ensure the availability of a high-quality mentoring program with well-trained mentors. City Commissioner Jeff Mims continues to play an active role in this effort through the Men of Color initiative.

To promote reading and summer learning, the Read On! Initiative collected and distributed 48,000 books in 2015. We recently announced this year's goal of 85,000 books to collect and distribute which will allow the initiative to expand to all Pre-K through third grade children in Dayton. Thanks to the leadership of the faith and business communities, we are well on our way to achieving this goal.

The work that has been done and the progress that has been made are impressive, but there remains so much more to do.

Based on Ohio's kindergarten readiness assessment, two-thirds of the children in Montgomery County, and 80% of the children in Dayton, start behind in kindergarten.

Let me repeat that. Eighty percent of the children in Dayton start kindergarten already behind, forcing them to play catch up from Day 1.

State Senator Peggy Lehner, who serves as chair of the Ohio Senate Education Committee, recently stated that, "If we don't catch those kids up in kindergarten, we'll never catch them up."

The truth is the path to success for our children starts long before their first day of kindergarten. Yet, there is a shortage of high quality Preschools in our city and one-third of Dayton's children are attending no Preschool at all.

Montgomery County Commissioners created a task force last year to study how best to address this issue. We appreciate their leadership, and I appreciate the work of Commissioner Debbie Lieberman along with community volunteer Pat Meadows as co-chairs of the City of Learners Preschool Committee.

As a result of the work of the county's task force, a Preschool Promise Demonstration Model is expected to begin in the City of Dayton and one of our suburbs in the Fall of 2016. The City Commission is pleased to join Montgomery County and the Dayton School Board in helping to fund this Demonstration.

This is an important project and an important first step. Our hope is that it will help to set the stage for bigger things to come. But, there are many questions that must be addressed and many obstacles to overcome. This community will have some tough decisions to make in order to meet this need.

But, if we are serious about being a City of Learners and if we are serious about preparing our kids to be successful, and if we are serious about building a brighter future for our city, making high quality, affordable Preschool available to every child must become a leading priority.

I said earlier that Dayton is well positioned to meet the challenges before us. Do we have the courage and the determination to meet these challenges? Are we prepared to act boldly to make the tough decisions and do what needs to be done?

Another Ohioan, William Dean Howells, once wrote that the people of Ohio were the sort of idealists who had "the courage of their dreams. By this courage they have made the best of (their dreams) come true."

The history of Dayton and the Miami Valley is filled with examples of people who had the courage to make their dreams come true.

It took courage for a Marianist priest and three Marianist brothers – a teacher, a cook and a gardener – to purchase 125 acres of land on a hilltop in the southern part of Dayton to establish a school that would become a major university.

It took courage for a small group of men known as the "Barn Gang" to spend their nights and weekends tinkering in an old barn to assemble a gadget that would revolutionize the automobile industry.

It took courage for the son of former slaves and the first African-American to attend Dayton Central High School to believe he could make a living as a writer and a poet.

It took courage for this community to get behind the vision of a civil engineer with no formal education to finance and build an incredible system of levees and dams to control the Great Miami River after the 1913 Flood.

It took courage for a woman who dreamed of expanding health care to an under-served population to build a multi-billion dollar corporation and headquarter that company in our downtown.

And, yes, it took courage for two brothers who owned a small bicycle shop on West Third Street to risk life and limb to conquer the skies and change the course of history.

As we consider our dreams and look to the great opportunities that lie before us, we can find inspiration from another quote from Wilbur Wright: “It is not really necessary to look too far into the future; we see enough already to be certain it will be magnificent. Only let us hurry and open the roads.”
Let us hurry and open the roads. The dream of a brighter future for the people of this city is at stake.

Let us be courageous. Let us be determined. Let us dare to act boldly now to shape the destiny of our city and, like the Wright Brothers, change the course of our history.

Thank you.”

ADJOURNMENT

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned at 8:55 a.m.

Mayor Nan Whaley

Attest: _____
Clerk of Commission